

Laura Leigh

re: Heat Index and Antelope

In observations of wild horse roundups over the last 15 years, I have observed a direct correlation between rising heat index/heat warnings with death rates during roundups.

I have been trying to get BLM to look at this rate since 2017; is it due to diminished human judgement or only the impact of heat in horses? Every process engaged in receives no report or response.

The roundup at the Antelope Complex has taken place over the last 20 days (as of July 29).

14 deaths occurred **during 6 days** of operating **during 2 heat index rises. 8 deaths** have occurred (BLM says from pre-existing conditions) **during the other 14 days of this operation (to date).**

Death onsite is not the only indicator of abuse during roundups in July when babies are young and the heat index is high.

At least 7 foals have been orphaned. 22 have died. Of the target goal of 3.107 for capture, BLM has reached 2040 as of July 29 at 6 a.m.

Video from the short-term holding facility north of Reno shows adults with signs of lameness and dozens foals showing signs of lameness.

The roundup began on July 9. There were 2 deaths in the first 2 days during the high heat that *included a foal that died of colic (a condition most often caused by stress and/or dehydration)* (2)

On July 11 the National Weather Service (NWS) issued a heat index/health warning that would begin the extended rise on July 13 and extend through Sunday July 16.

On July 12 we sent BLM an email requesting BLM suspend operations during the heat warning or at least consider suspending operations through the worst of the extended warning (Friday through Monday to allow the herd to rehydrate and recover).

On July 13, as the extended heat index was beginning:

A sorrel foal died of dehydration.

A foal died of colic,

A foal was lame and euthanized

Stallion suffered a catastrophic compound fracture and then was run for over 30 minutes to the far side of the valley and shot. (4)

On July 14, as the heat index hit the extreme caution zone, a mare fractured her neck and died. BLM also said they put down a mare for being blind in one eye. (2)

On July 15, BLM said a foal died (not euthanized) of a hernia (generally a hernia does not simply kill you unless it interferes with breathing under stress or other complication) (1)

On July 16, BLM operated only 1 trap and there were 2 catastrophic neck fractures; 1 during loading and 1 at trap. (2)

9 of the initial 11 deaths occurred during the extended heat index rise, the first foal died (of colic) on a day (according to BLM) temperatures reached 93 degrees.

July 16-20 the north trap experienced no deaths. On July 19 and 20 the south trap euthanized 2 horses for being “blind or missing an eye.”

The second round of extended heat warnings were to begin on July 21.

I made numerous attempts to communicate and was ignored except when I was accused of talking about “cows on the range.”

On July 21, A 4-year old bay stallion suffered a fractured rear leg.

A bay foal that was trailing behind seemed to simply stop running as family was captured, BLM said his death was due to a pre-existing, fractured, right rear leg (we do not know if they mean it fractured simply before he was captured).

A 20-year old Sorrel mare; Death (Acute/Unexpected); lameness, left rear leg.

BLM said a foal was “club foot” and killed it (but provided no documentation to show it was not within the normal range for hoof development in young foals). (4)

July 22, BLM told observers onsite a foal was euthanized for being humpback (a sign of pain) but reported a yearling was put down. (1)

5 wild horses died during the second heat index rise.

Since July 24 there have been 4 deaths.

BLM website: Bay, 3-year old Stud (Male); Death (Chronic/Pre-existing); Humanely euthanized due to a physical defect; hernia

Bay, 20+-year old Stud (Male); Death (Chronic/Pre-existing); Humanely euthanized due to blindness in the left eye

20+ year old Bay stallion; Death (Chronic/Pre-existing); Humanely euthanized due to missing left eye

Bay, colt (Male); Death (Chronic/Pre-existing); Humanely euthanized due to a physical defect (deformity); Right, front leg